

To the Members of the California Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2683 without my signature.

I am extremely proud of our men and women in the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. However, by mandating that compensation of CDF firefighters be based upon prevailing rates in other jurisdictions and establishing a formula-driven compensation program that results in automatic salary increases will remove the fiscal control of State employee salaries from the Legislature and the Governor.

The bill is contrary to the provisions of the Ralph C. Dills Act, which explicitly states that wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment fall within the scope of negotiations for rank and file state employees. In fact, we recently reached an agreement with this bargaining unit through the collective bargaining process and the Legislature ratified the MOU in August. If the State is to have good faith collective bargaining, then employee compensation and benefits must not be legislated.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger